

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) An additive for conglomerate building materials, selected from the group consisting of gypsum and mortar, that comprises a solid mineral component comprised of clay, and at least a modified natural gum the additive being free of cellulose derivatives, wherein the solid mineral component is a rheological grade sepiolite.

Claim 2 (Previously amended) An additive according to claim 1 comprising
20-75% by weight of the solid mineral component;
25-80% by weight of the modified natural gum.

Claim 3 (Previously amended) An additive according to claim 1 comprising:
35-60% by weight of the solid mineral component;
40-65% by weight of the modified natural gum.

Claim 4 (Canceled)

Claim 5 (Previously Amended) An additive according to claim 1, wherein the modified natural gum is at least one combination of at least two monosaccharides, glucose, mannose, galactose, and glucuronic acid, modified by etherification.

Claim 6 (Previously amended) an additive according to claim 5, wherein the combination of monosaccharides is etherified with an alkylene oxide selected from ethylene oxide, propylene oxide and butylene oxide.

Claim 7 (Previously Amended) An additive according to claim 5, wherein the combination of monosaccharides is a galactomanane.

Claim 8 (Previously Amended) An additive according to claim 1, wherein the modified natural gum is modified guar gum.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended) A filled composition of conglomerate building materials [selected from the group consisting of among gypsum and special mortars, that comprises] comprising

a fraction selected from the group consisting of [among] a cement [fraction], [a] gypsum [fraction], and an aggregate [fraction],

and 0.05-1.2% by weight of the additive [defined in] according to claim 1.

Claim 10 (Previously Amended) A filled composition according to claim 9 comprising 0.2%-0.9% by weight of the additive.

Claim 11 (Previously Amended) A method of using the additive of claim 1 as a component in a mortar, the method comprising adding the additive to the mortar.

Claim 12 (Canceled)